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TUESDAY, MAY 3, 1870.

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEYSHIP. The contest for the District Attorneyship has finally been decided, as will be seen by the report of the proceedings in the Court of Quarter Sessions this morning in another column, and in favor of Furman Sheppard, Esq., who has been declared legally elected by a majority of thirteen votes. This decision of the court will be cordially acquiesced in by men of all parties, and Mr. Sheppard and the public are alike to be congratulated upon the result. During the brief term in which he held the office Mr. Sheppard proved himself to be emphatically the right man in the right place. Of his honesty and learning his most bitter political enemies never had the shadow of a doubt, but he surprised even his best friends by the eminently able manner in which he aided in the impartial administration of justice. From the first he showed a disposition to do his whole duty without fear, favor, or partiality, and he gave the office of District Attorney a dignity that it unfortunately had long lacked. Mr. Sheppard is well known to be a Democrat and a strong partisan, but no one believes that he will prostitute his office or use his influence as a public officer for any mere party purposes. No matter what his political opinions may be, such a man is better fitted to perform the delicate and responsible duties of the District Attorneyship than one less impressed with the importance of the functions devolved upon him, and we are confident that in the future as in the past Mr. Sheppard may be relied upon for a conscientious performance of his duty according to the oath he has taken. There is no reason why there should be any connection whatever between the political questions of the day and the office of District Attorney, and it is of vastly more importance to the community that the office should be filled by a lawyer of acknowledged ability and integrity than that the question of its occupancy should be decided upon merely partisan considerations.

THE INTERNAL REVENUE BUREAU.

The Commissioner of Internal Revenue has lately put forth the fourth or fifth of his series of statements comparing the collections of the present year with various periods of the preceding fiscal year. If these statements are merely intended for general information as to the working of the law, there can certainly be no objection to them; but if, as seems to be generally understood, they are put forth for the purpose of glorifying the administration of the present Commissioner over that of his predecessor, they are simply false and unfair, worthy only of some tricky pettifogger.

A simple illustration will show the fallacy of such a comparison of figures for such a purpose. During the fiscal year 1867-8 the tax was collected on only six million gallons of distilled spirits, while during the year 1868-9 the tax was collected on sixty-two millions, more than ten times the former amount. Must we therefore conclude that the Commissioner of 1867-8 was a great knave in league with the distillers against the Government, while the Commissioner of 1868-9 is entitled to great credit as a capable, honest, and efficient officer? The difficulty in the way is that the same gentleman was Commissioner during both of these years, that the increase was due to a more effective law, and that the tax of the latter year was actually collected with much less labor than the small tax of the former year. The simple truth is that, under the provisions of the law of 1867-8, it was utterly impossible to collect the tax on distilled spirits. The whole system was an utter failure, and Congress acknowledged it by repealing the law and substituting therefor the act of July 20, 1868.

As a matter of history not generally known, it may be observed that this act was approved by President Johnson July 20, 1868, and filed in the State Department. On the same day, however, he withdrew it, and held it for some days, finally returning it to the State Department on the 23d or 24th of July, with the original approval upon it; and during this time the joint efforts of the Secretary of the Treasury and the Commissioner to ascertain whether or not the bill had been approved were without avail, and the bill was in fact a law, and in force as such, for three or four days, during which time it was kept close concealed in the President's pocket.

Immediately on its being known that the bill had been signed, instructions were issued to close every distillery in the country, so that they might be reorganized under the provisions and restrictions of the new law. The preparation of the necessary instructions and regulations for this purpose was a work of time, and but a very few distilleries were able to reorganize during the month of August, but a few more in September, and it was not until October that there was anything like a fair resumption of business. A comparison of the product or receipts from this source of the first six months of this fiscal year 1868-70, and those of 1868-9, is completely valueless whether intended as a demonstration of the effectiveness of the new law or as a glorification of the present Commissioner. It is in fact a comparison of the results of six full months of the present year with only half of that time for the preceding year; and the suspicious part of the case is that these comparative statements are put forth without the slightest reference

to this state of facts, and therefore have the effect of completely misleading the public. Take, for instance, the product of five whiskeys. During the first six months of the year 1868-9 the product was less than three millions of gallons, while during the last six months of the same year the product was about fourteen millions of gallons, more than quadruple, showing the increase in the amount done during the last six months over the first half of the year, one full month of which was under the old law.

It should also be borne in mind that it is a work of time to inaugurate and put in working order a new system so radically different as that provided for in the act of July 20, 1868, as compared with that of the preceding law, and to cause it to be properly understood by officers and tax-payers. Mistakes are very likely to be made at first, which are corrected as time and experience show the necessity thereof, and it is only by experience that any system can be even tolerably perfected.

The position of Commissioner of Internal Revenue is not a bed of roses, but rather of the thorns without the flowers. No man who has held that position has escaped attack. It is not an office which can be used for personal self-aggrandizement, or as a means of advancing one's political interests, and any attempt to do so will prove an entire failure. Every mistake made by him or any of his subordinates is seized upon as a new point of attack. If he refuses to investigate, examine into, or even listen to evidence showing that one of his subordinates is a defaulter, but in defiance thereof puts him in a more responsible position, and it afterwards becomes known that the charge was true, or if he persists in insisting upon some transparent book swindle, he had better retire from office as soon as possible. Certain it is that success in personal political aims does not lie in that direction. Even if he is solely actuated by a desire to faithfully and honestly discharge the duties of his office, the effect of such mistakes can only be counteracted by the most prompt correction. Certainly, a dozen comparative statements, in which the results of six or eight full months are undertaken to be set up against one-half or five-eighths of that time, is a veil altogether too transparent to cover so open a blunder, even if it be called by no worse name. Such material is too poor even for a New York railroad president. It might do for a mock-auction room, but is hardly the standard for the Senate of the United States.

THE RIGHTS OF PENSIONERS.

The pensioners are a class that have manifest claims upon the consideration of the Government, and it needs no argument to show that, in common justice, they ought to receive all that they are entitled to under the laws, without any abatement whatever, and without being obliged to bear any of the expenses attending upon the machinery of the Pension Bureau.

These pensions are granted for personal services of a peculiar kind: they are small in amount, and those who receive them are for the most part poor and often ignorant persons, who are but little able to look out for their own interests or to protect themselves from imposition. Under the present system of paying pensions the agents are not only allowed certain fees which are deducted from the amounts paid to the pensioners, but opportunities are offered for innumerable frauds both upon the pensioners and the Government, and the whole arrangement has fallen into such discredit that it is high time a reform was effected, if only for the sake of a general purification by the abandonment of a series of offices that afford too many temptations to those who are imbued by the idea that the treasury is a legitimate object of plunder, and that it is no crime to pocket the public money. The idea has become general both in and out of Congress that the present system of pension agencies is cumbersome and unsatisfactory both to the Government and the pensioners, but the agents are for the most part men of political influence, and the consequence is that, although a few members of Congress have pressed for a reform, the majority have shown very little interest in the matter. And it is greatly to be feared that the session will be allowed to pass away without any definite action being taken. It is true that a number of bills have been introduced, some of which present excellent features, and if the friends of reform will urge the necessity for immediate action they may perhaps stir up the lukewarm and unwilling members to the performance of their obvious duties.

The necessity for a reform is plainly shown by the case of Colonel W. T. Forbes, one of the pension agents located in this city, to which we have already alluded on several occasions. Colonel Forbes admits that the pensioners were robbed in his office, but lays the blame upon his clerk. The clerk, on the other hand, asserts positively that he acted under Colonel Forbes' instruction. Whichever of the two may be guilty, this case is a practical demonstration of the evils attending the present system, and it ought to have its influence in bringing about an improvement in the whole method of paying the pensions.

In organizing any system for the payment of the pensions there has to be considered the rights of the pensioners themselves, who are entitled to receive without abatement every cent promised them; and the necessity for the Government to protect itself from possible frauds on the part either of the pensioners or the agents, and to reduce the expenses attending the payment of pensions to the lowest possible amount. Of all the measures now before Congress for the accomplishment of these objects the bill presented by Judge Lawrence, of Ohio, appears to be the best adapted for effecting the desired as a demonstration of the effectiveness of the new law or as a glorification of the present Commissioner. It is in fact a comparison of the results of six full months of the present year with only half of that time for the preceding year; and the suspicious part of the case is that these comparative statements are put forth without the slightest reference

pensioners, all the vouchers, powers of attorney, and other necessary papers. This will provide a much greater number of agencies than at present, and will consequently offer greater facilities to the pensioners, many of whom are infirm and aged, to get their money without unnecessary trouble. Such an arrangement as this ought to work better for all parties than the present cumbersome system, that seems designed not for the convenience of the pensioners or for the protection of the Government interests, but for the purpose of providing a number of fat offices for needy politicians; and we hope sincerely that Judge Lawrence's bill will receive the candid consideration of Congress.

Judge Lawrence proposes to pay the pensions every three months instead of semi-annually. This improvement ought certainly to be adopted, as owing to the poverty of many of the pensioners they do not really get the full value of their money when they receive it all in a lump, independently of the fact that they are frequently compelled to submit to the extortions of money-lenders who advance sums upon their claims at enormous rates of interest. Indeed, it would be desirable that the pensions should be paid much more frequently than this, and once a month at least is what ought to be aimed at, provided it can be done without too great an additional expense. The pensioners are a poor and politically unimportant class, and consequently they excite but little interest comparatively. On this account, however, they are the more worthy of regard, and Congress will neglect its duty if it overlooks their claims or permits the present abuses of the pension agencies to continue without at least an effort at reform.

At the meeting of the contributors of the Pennsylvania Hospital the question of the women students was disposed of in a very proper manner by the adoption of a resolution instructing the Managers to make such arrangements, after consulting with the medical staff, as may be necessary for the accommodation of the students of the female medical colleges. The female students of medicine are certainly entitled to the benefit of the hospital facilities, but their attendance on all occasions at clinics, in company with the male students, is perhaps open to objections. The Managers of the Hospital are gentlemen of discretion and good judgment, and they will doubtless be able to perfect an arrangement that will be entirely satisfactory to everybody but a few irreconcilables of both parties.

—This is what Leavenworth claims the champion belt for:—"We can turn out a larger number of people to a smaller fire, and they'll leave a better dinner and run faster, and surround the configuration quicker, stay there longer and go home wetter, than any other town in America."

DIVIDENDS, ETC.

THE COMMERCIAL NATIONAL BANK OF PHILADELPHIA, May 3, 1870. The Board of Directors have this day declared a Dividend of FIVE PER CENT, payable on demand, clear of tax. S. PALMER, Cashier.

NATIONAL BANK OF THE REPUBLIC, Philadelphia, May 3, 1870. The Board of Directors have this day declared a Dividend of SEVEN PER CENT, payable on demand, clear of tax. JOSEPH P. MUMFORD, Cashier.

THE PHILADELPHIA NATIONAL BANK, Philadelphia, May 3, 1870. The Directors have this day declared a Dividend of SEVEN PER CENT, payable on demand, clear of tax. B. B. COMEY, Cashier.

FARMERS' AND MECHANICS' NATIONAL BANK, Philadelphia, May 3, 1870. The Board of Directors have this day declared a Dividend of FIVE PER CENT, payable on demand, clear of tax. W. RUSKIN, Jr., Cashier.

NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE, Philadelphia, May 3, 1870. The Board of Directors have this day declared a Dividend of FIVE PER CENT, payable on demand, clear of tax. JOHN A. LEWIS, Cashier.

COMMONWEALTH NATIONAL BANK, Philadelphia, May 3, 1870. The Directors have this day declared a Dividend of FIVE PER CENT, payable on demand, clear of tax. H. U. YOUNG, Cashier.

SOUTHWARK NATIONAL BANK, Philadelphia, May 3, 1870. The Directors have this day declared a Dividend of EIGHT PER CENT, payable on demand, clear of tax. F. M. B. Cashier.

CITY NATIONAL BANK, Philadelphia, May 3, 1870. The Board of Directors have this day declared a Dividend of SIX PER CENT, payable on demand, clear of tax. G. ALBERT LEWIS, Cashier.

CORN EXCHANGE NATIONAL BANK, Philadelphia, May 3, 1870. The Board of Directors have this day declared a Dividend of SIX PER CENT, payable on demand, clear of tax. H. P. SCHETKY, Cashier.

MECHANICS' NATIONAL BANK, Philadelphia, May 3, 1870. The Board of Directors have this day declared a Dividend of SIX PER CENT, payable on demand, clear of tax. J. WIEGAND, Jr., Cashier.

FOURTH NATIONAL BANK, Philadelphia, May 3, 1870. At a meeting of the Directors, held this day, it was unanimously resolved to pass the dividend, and that Ten Thousand Dollars of the profits of the past six months be transferred to the surplus account. R. F. MOODY, Cashier.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

For Additional Special Notices see the Inside Pages.

ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS. LAST DAYS OF THE EXHIBITION OF SHELDON'S RIDE. Great Life-size Painting by the POET-ARTIST. T. BUCHANAN READ. TENTH WEEK AND UNKAMPTER SUCCESS. The Poem recited at 12 M., and 9 P. M., daily, by MR. J. B. ROBERTS, the distinguished Tragedian and Elocutionist. 35 2d St. Including the entire valuable collection of the Academy. Open from 9 A. M. to 6 P. M., and 9 P. M., daily.

THE WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE M. E. CHURCH will hold a public meeting TUESDAY EVENING, May 3, at 7 1/2 o'clock, in GREEN STREET CHURCH. Addresses on "Woman's Work in India" by Rev. CHARLES MARDEN, J. S. GRAVEY, and J. D. BROWN, returned missionaries. Dr. CRAWFORD, of New York, is expected to preside. Also a Ladies' meeting at 3 1/4 o'clock, WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, May 4, at the same place. Addressed by Mrs. L. BUTLER, a returned missionary, and Mrs. J. W. WILLING, of Chicago.

BETH-EDEN BAPTIST CHURCH, BROAD AND SPRUCE STREETS.—This Evening at 8 o'clock, sermon by Rev. P. B. HENSON, D. D. Change to the Church by Rev. CHARLES MARDEN. Hand of Fellowship by Rev. GEORGE D. BOABOMAN, D. D. with other interesting services in connection with recognition of church.

FUEL SAVINGS SOCIETY OF THE CITY AND LIBERTIES OF PHILADELPHIA.—The Forty-ninth Annual Meeting of the Society will be held at No. 10 TWENTH STREET, on TUESDAY (Tuesday), 3d inst., at 8 1/2 o'clock P. M. Election of Officers. By order of the Managers.

B. W. BERSLEY, Secretary.

SPECIAL NOTICES. A Fine Lot of "Nobby" Clothing for Young Gents. JOHN WANAMAKER, Nos. 818 and 820 Chesnut Street.

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THE REPUBLICAN CITIZENS OF THE TENTH WARD FAVORABLE TO THE NOMINATION OF JOHN PRICE WITHERILL FOR CONGRESS. In the Second Congressional District, will meet at the WARD HOUSE, Northeast corner of RACE and BROAD Streets, On TUESDAY EVENING, May 3d, 1870, at eight o'clock.

ELEVENTH WARD REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION. At a stated meeting held May 2, at the Hall of the Association, ST. JOHN and BUTTONTOWN Streets, it was unanimously resolved that JOSEPH A. BONHAM is their choice for REGISTER OF WILL.

CLOTHING. THE QUESTION IS IN EVERYBODY'S MOUTH. "Have You Seen Those Ten Dollar Suits?"

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